

# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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## DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

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April 1, 2009

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.  
Director of Mental Health

SUBJECT: **ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO ENTER INTO SOLE SOURCE CONTRACT AMENDMENTS WITH ST. JOSEPH CENTER AND SAN FERNANDO VALLEY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.**

This memo is to comply with the Chief Administrative Officer, David E. Janssen's September 1999 letter regarding contracting policy requirements for sole source contracts. It is the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's (DMH) intent to amend existing Agreements with St. Joseph Center (St. Joseph's), located at 204 Hampton Drive, Venice, CA 90291, to include the Venice Chronic Homeless Intervention Project; and San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center, Inc. (SFVCMHC), located at 6842 Van Nuys Boulevard, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, Van Nuys, CA 91405 to include the Van Nuys "Street-to-Home Project." Both programs are innovative projects modeled on Project 50.

In recent years, Los Angeles County has collaborated with governmental and non-governmental agencies to implement programs that address homelessness, such as Project 50 in the Skid Row area of Los Angeles. However, chronically homeless individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse disorders and/or complex medical conditions continue to live on the streets, under freeway bridges, and in encampments, parks, or temporary shelters in areas throughout the County. These individuals are often high utilizers of costly hospital emergency rooms, acute inpatient units, long-term institutional services and jails.

As part of efforts to meet the critical needs for housing and mental health and substance abuse services for these homeless individuals, St. Joseph's and SFVCMHC, in collaboration with the Third District and DMH, have developed proposals for pilot projects to provide housing and integrated health, mental health and substance abuse services for a total of 70 of the most vulnerable, chronically homeless individuals living in Venice and the San Fernando Valley, respectively. The critical need for these

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services precludes entering into lengthy Request For Proposals, DMH proposes to enter into sole source negotiations with St. Joseph's and SFVCMHC for these services.

#### St. Joseph Center

The 2007 homeless count conducted by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority indicated that the number of homeless individuals in Venice has continued to increase. Currently Venice has the highest homeless-to-housed residents ratio in Los Angeles County: 1 homeless person for every 32 housed individuals.

St. Joseph's proposes to lead a community-wide effort to create a Service Registry for high-risk, chronically homeless individuals residing in Venice and to provide the Venice Chronic Homeless Intervention Project, an assertive, intervention-focused case management program that, over a two-year period, will provide permanent housing with supportive services for 40 individuals identified as most likely to die on the streets.

St. Joseph's is uniquely qualified to provide these services as it is the only contracted legal entity provider of mental health services in the Venice area and is experienced in serving the homeless mentally ill population. St. Joseph's has demonstrated, through its participation in Santa Monica's Service Registry/Chronic Homeless Program, that it can provide innovative, focused interventions that move chronically homeless persons off the streets and into stable housing.

#### San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center, Inc.

In the San Fernando Valley there is a large concentration of chronically homeless persons with severe mental illness who are currently living on the streets, in alleyways and in cold weather shelters (December to April). They tend to congregate in public areas such as Civic Center parks, freeway underpasses and other street encampments.

SFVCMHC proposes to implement the Van Nuys "Street-to-Home Project" to "fast track" 30 of the most vulnerable chronically homeless individuals in the San Fernando Valley into transitional housing and move them into permanent supportive housing over a one year period. SFVCMHC will use the "Housing First" model, in combination with additional outreach and engagement tools proven effective for Project 50 in the Skid Row area.

SFVCMHC is uniquely qualified to provide services for this project as it is a multiple services agency located in San Fernando Valley that has been serving this target population at the Cornerstone Multi-Purpose Drop-In Center. The Center serves as a gateway for mental health services, housing and benefits for the most hard to reach, chronically homeless and vulnerable individuals. In addition, SFVCMHC has extensive experience collaborating with other community agencies, health centers, homeless shelters and law enforcement and providing permanent supportive housing for its

clients. SFVCMHC has identified housing in a residential area of Van Nuys that will enable the agency to provide safe and well-equipped residences for this project while enhancing the neighborhood. SFVCMHC is strategically positioned to begin providing services immediately.

Both proposals will utilize the "Vulnerability Index" developed by the Common Ground of New York to identify certain high risk factors that are predictors of high chronicity and mortality, such as the tri-morbid conditions of mental illness, substance abuse and debilitating medical conditions.

These projects will be funded by the Third Supervisorial District's allocation from the County's Homeless Prevention Initiative.

Unless otherwise instructed, DMH will proceed with preparing sole source contract amendments, working with the Office of the County Counsel and the Chief Executive Office.

MJS:TB:MM:mm

c: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel